

Portugal: International Fire Safety Summit

By: Michelle Ryerson-Grett, OF&A Safety Manager

I had the pleasure of representing the Bureau of Land Management and the other DOI wildland fire agencies at the 2002 Wildland Fire Safety Summit; held in Luso, Portugal. The Safety Summit was held in congruence with the IV International Conference on Forest Fire Research.

The primary focus of the Safety Summit was to share information and network with other fire safety professionals around the world with the goal of improving firefighter safety. I personally was able to make contact with key constituents from Canada and Australia and discuss critical fire safety issues. This was especially beneficial since these two countries support the US wildland fire program. Several presentations reviewed fire-related fatalities and what lessons were and can be learned from them. There were several panel presentations that allowed for open debate and discussion opportunities.



This conference was well attended by the European community, Australia, Canada, and the United States. However, I believe that the Federal wildland fire community for the United States was underrepresented; especially at the Conference on Forest Fire Research. I think it is critical that we maintain a presence at these venues. The United States is the leader in wildland fire suppression and fuels management programs and we can provide critical information to other countries; as well as, glean knowledge on issues and solutions affecting firefighter safety—rather it is through research or operations.

I will forward abstracts from this conference to key OF&A personnel who may have an interest in the specific program areas (e.g., fuels, retardant, fire behavior).

Sincere thanks to the International Program for assisting me on each step of the international travel process and providing me with key information concerning this conference.